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ABSTRACT

The use of polling is partly responsible for a change in the relationship between government and public opinion. There is a range of public opinion from little or no concern to very intense concern about an issue. Polls translate personal beliefs into collective public opinions, often losing the strong feelings at the one end and the moderate feelings at the other. The result is a poll which is supposedly representative of the general public, but which, in reality, may give a misleading picture of real concerns. When government officials view this poll data, they often concentrate on the middle range of feelings and interpret this as the public view on an issue. Officials thus feel less pressure from the public. Data from polls may also be used to modify the attitudes of those polled and those who read the polls; also to help predict negative attitudes before they are manifested in outward behavior, such as riots. (BY)

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POLLING AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION

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Abstract

Polling and the Transformation of Public Opinion

Polling is generally thought to be the most scientific and accurate means of measuring public opinion. Yet, polling does more than simply measure and record the natural or spontaneous manifestation of popular sentiment. Rather, the data reported by the polls is the product of an interplay between opinion and the survey instrument. As they measure, the polls interact with opinion, producing changes in the character and identity of the views receiving public expression. The changes induced by polling, in turn, have the most profound implications for the relationship between public opinion and government. In essence, polling domesticates public opinion, transforming it from a politically potent, often disruptive force into a more docile, plebiscitary phenomenon. As a result, polling has been among the key factors behind the shift from an adversary to a managerial relationship between government and opinion in the 20th century.

The "will of the people" has become the ultimate standard against which the conduct of contemporary governments is measured. In the democracies, especially in the United States, both the value of governmental programs and virtue of public officials are typically judged by the extent of their popularity.[1] Twentieth century dictatorships, for their part, are careful at least to give lip service to the idea of popular sovereignty, if only to bolster public support at home and to maintain a favorable image abroad. Some despots manage to convince even themselves that they truly speak for or, in fact, actually embody the popular will.[2]

Much of the prominence of opinion polling as a civic institution derives from the significance that present-day political ideologies ascribe to the will of the people. Polls purport to provide reliable, scientifically derived information about the public's desires, fears and beliefs, and so to give concrete expression to the conception of a popular will. The availability of accurate information certainly is no guarantee that governments will actually pay heed to popular opinions. Yet, it has always been the belief of many students and practitioners of survey research that an accurate picture of the public's views might at least increase the chance that governments' actions would be informed by and responsive to popular sentiment.[3]

Unfortunately, however, polls do more than simply measure and record the natural or spontaneous manifestation of popular belief. The data reported by opinion polls are actually the product of an interplay between opinion and the survey instrument.[4] As they measure, the polls interact with opinion, producing changes in the character and identity of the views receiving public expression. The changes induced by polling, in turn, have the most profound implications for the relationship between public opinion and government. In essence, polling domesticates public opinion, transforming it from a politically potent, often disruptive force into a more docile, plebiscitary phenomenon. As a result, polling has been among the key factors behind the shift from an adversary to a managerial relationship between government and opinion in the 20th century.

Publicizing Opinion

Over the past several decades, polling has generally come to be seen as the most accurate and reliable means of gauging the public's sentiments. Poll results and public opinion are terms that are used almost synonymously. As one indication of the extent to which public opinion is now identified with the polls, note that a sophisticated new national magazine, entitled Public Opinion, matter-of-factly devotes virtually all its attention to the presentation and discussion of survey data.

Despite this general tendency to equate public opinion with survey results, polling is obviously not the only possible source of knowledge about the public's attitudes. Means of ascertaining public opinion certainly existed prior to the development of modern survey techniques. Statements from local notables and interest group spokespersons, letters to the press and to public officials, and sometimes dem-

onstrations, protests and riots provided indications of the populace's views long before the invention of the sample suvey. Governments certainly took note of all these symptoms of the public's mood. As Chester Barnard once noted, prior to the availability of polling, legislators "read the local newspapers, toured their districts and talked with voters, received letters from the home state, and entertained delegations which claimed to speak for large and important blocks of voters."[5]

Obviously, these alternative modes of assessing public sentiment continue to be available. Polling has not become the only possible source of information about popular opinion. But it is significant that whenever poll results differ from the interpretation of public opinion offered by some other source, it is almost invariably the polls that are presumed to be correct. The labor leader whose account of the views of the rank and file differs from the findings of a poll is automatically assumed to have misrepresented or misperceived membership opinion. Politicians who dare to quarrel with the polls' negative assessments of the popularity of their programs are immediately derided by the press.

This presumption in favor of the polls stems from both the scientific and representative character of opinion polling. Survey research is modelled after the methodology of the natural sciences and at least conveys an impression of technical sophistication and scientific objectivity. Occasional press accounts of deliberate bias and distortion of survey findings only partially undermine this impression.[6]

At the same time, the polls can claim to offer a more represen-

tative view of popular sentiment than any alternative source of information is likely to provide. Group spokesmen sometimes speak only for themselves. The distribution of opinion reflected by letters to newspapers and public officials is notoriously biased. Demonstrators and rioters, however sincere, are seldom more than a tiny and unrepresentative segment of the populace. The polls, by contrast, at least attempt to take equal account of all relevant individuals. And, indeed, by offering a representative view of public opinion the polls have often served as antidotes for false spokesmen, correctives for mistaken politicians, and guides to popular concerns that might never have been mentioned by the individuals writing letters to legislators and newspaper editors.

Nevertheless, polling does more than offer a scientifically derived and representative account of popular sentiment. The substitution of polling for other means of gauging the public's views also has the effect of changing several of the key characteristics of public opinion. Critics of survey research have often noted that polling can affect both the beliefs of individuals asked to respond to survey questions and the attitudes of those who subsequently read a survey's results.[7] However, the most important effect of the polls is not a result of their capacity to change individuals' beliefs. The major impact of polling is, rather, on the cumulation and translation of individuals' private beliefs into collective public opinions.

Beliefs can obviously vary greatly in terms of the extent and character of their presence in the public forum. Some views seldom

receive public expression while others remain matters of vigorous public discussion for protracted periods. In recent years, polling has come to be one of the important factors which helps to determine how, whose, which and when private beliefs will become public matters. Indeed, the advent of polling has done much to change the aggregation, cumulation and public expression of citizens' beliefs. Four fundamental changes in the character of public opinion can be traced to the introduction of survey research.

First, polling alters both what is expressed and what is perceived as the opinion of the mass public by transforming public opinion from a voluntary to an externally subsidized matter. Second, polling modifies the manner in which opinion is publicly presented by transforming public opinion from a behavioral to an attitudinal phenomenon. Third, polling changes the origin of information about public beliefs by transforming public opinion from a property of groups to an attribute of individuals. Finally, polling partially removes individuals' control over the subject matter of their own public expressions of opinion by transforming public opinion from a spontaneous assertion to a constrained response.

Individually and collectively, these transformations have profound consequences for the character of public opinion and, more important, for the relationship of opinion to government and policy. To the extent that polling displaces alternative modes of gauging popular sentiment, these four transformations cumulate to a domestication or pacification of public opinion. Polling renders public opinion less dangerous, less disruptive, more permissive and more

amenable to governmental control.

From Voluntarism to Subsidy

In the absence of polling, the cost and effort required to organize and publicly communicate an opinion are normally borne by one or more of the individuals holding the opinion. Someone wishing to express a view about civil rights, for example, might write a letter, deliver a speech, contribute to an organization or join a protest march. A wealthy individual might employ a public relations expert; a politically astute individual might assert that he or she represented the views of many others. But, whatever the means, the organization and public communication of opinion would entail a voluntary expenditure of funds, effort, or time on the part of an opinion-holder. The polls, by contrast, organize and publicize opinion without necessitating any initiative or action on the part of individuals. With the exception of the small sample asked to submit to an interview, the individuals whose opinions are expressed through the polls need take no action whatsoever. The polls underwrite or subsidize the costs of eliciting, organizing, and publicly expressing opinion.

This displacement of costs from the opinion-holder to the polling agency has important consequences for the character of the opinions likely to receive public expression. In general, the willingness of individuals to bear the costs of publicly asserting their views is closely tied to the intensity with which they hold those views. Other things being equal, individuals with strong feelings about any given matter are more likely to invest whatever time and effort are needed

to make their feelings known, than are persons with less intense views. One seldom hears, for example, of a "march on Washington" by groups professing not to care much about abortion. As the example of abortion might suggest, moreover, individuals with intense points of view are also more likely than their less zealous fellow-citizens to be found at the extremes of opinion on any given question.[8] Thus, so long as the costs of asserting opinions are borne by opinion-holders themselves, those with relatively extreme viewpoints are also disproportionately likely to bring their views to the public forum.

The polls weaken this relationship between the public expression of opinion and the intensity or extremity of opinion. The assertion of an opinion through a poll requires little effort on the part of the opinion-holder. As a result, the beliefs of those who care relatively little or even hardly at all, are as likely to be publicized as the opinions of those who care a great deal about the matter in question. Similarly, individuals with moderate viewpoints are as likely as those taking extreme positions to publicly communicate their opinions through a survey. The upshot is, that the distribution of public opinion reported by the polls generally differs considerably from the distribution that emerges from forms of public communication initiated by citizens. Clausen, et. al. and others have shown that the public opinion reported by surveys is, on the aggregate, both less intense and less extreme than the public opinion which would be defined by voluntary modes of popular expression.[9] Similarly, poll respondents typically include a much larger proportion of individuals who "don't

know", "don't care", or exhibit some other form of relative detachment from the debate on major public issues than the population of activists willing to express their views through voluntary or spontaneous means.[10]

This difference between polled and voluntarily expressed opinion can have important implications for the degree of influence or constraint that public opinion is likely to impose upon administrators and policy makers. The polls, in effect, submerge individuals with strongly held views in a more apathetic mass public. The data reported by the polls is likely to suggest to public officials that they are working in a more permissive climate of opinion than might have been thought on the basis of alternative indicators of the popular mood. A government wishing to maintain some semblance of responsiveness to public opinion would typically find it less difficult to comply with the preferences reported by the polls than to obey the opinion that might be inferred from letters, strikes, or protests. Indeed, relative to these other modes of public expression, polled opinion could be characterized as a collective statement of permission.

Certainly, even in the era of polling, voluntary expressions of public opinion can still count heavily. Recently, for example, members of Congress seem to have been strongly impressed by calls, letters, and telegrams from constituents--and threats from contributors--favoring President Reagan's tax reform program. Of course, groups like the National Rifle Association are masters of the use of this type of opinion campaign. Nevertheless, contradiction by the polls tends to reduce the weight and credibility of other sources of public opinion.

This effect of polling can actually help governments to resist the pressure of constituent opinion. Constituency polls, for example, are often used by legislators as a basis for resisting the demands of political activists and pressure groups in their districts. Polls can frequently allow legislators who so desire to claim that the more vocal elements in their constituency do not truly represent the wishes of the constituency as-a-whole.[11]

Polling is especially useful when voluntary expressions of public opinion indicate severe opposition to a government and its programs. The relatively permissive character of polled opinion can allow a government faced with demonstrations, protests, and other manifestations of public hostility, a basis for the claim that its policies are compatible with true public opinion and opposed only by an unrepresentative group of activist malcontents. A notable contemporary illustration of this role of the polls is the case of the "silent majority" on whose behalf Richard Nixon claimed to govern. The notion of a silent majority was the Nixon administration's answer to the protestors, demonstrators, rioters, and other critics who demanded major changes in American foreign and domestic policies. Administration spokespersons frequently cited poll data, often drawing upon Scammon and Wattenberg's influential treatise, The Real Majority, to question the popular standing of the activist opposition. According to the administration's interpretation, its activist opponents did not represent the views of the vast majority of "silent" Americans who could be found in the polls but not on picket lines, marches, or civil disturbances.

Undoubtedly, a majority of Americans were less than sympathetic to the protestors. But from the administration's perspective, the real virtue of the silent majority was precisely its silence. Many of those Americans who remained silent did so because they lacked strong opinions on the political issues of the day. Thus, the silent majority imposed few restrictions on the administration while allowing it to claim that it, rather than the protestors, truly represented the public's views. The use of the polls to identify a "silent majority" was a means of diluting the political weight and undermining the credibility of those members of the public with the strongest views while constructing a permissive majority of "silent" Americans.[12] In a sense, the polls came to be used against those persons who truly had opinions.

Even more illustrative, however, of the permissive character of polled opinion is Lyndon Johnson's reaction to surveys of public opinion about the Vietnam war. Johnson was apparently somewhat more concerned with the public's feelings than his successor. Johnson constantly referred to the polls to attempt to convince friends, visitors, colleagues, and most of all himself that the public supported his war policies. Indeed, Johnson's eventual realization that public opinion had turned against his administration weighed heavily in his decision not to seek another term in office.[13] The significance of the Johnson case is that the polls permitted a president who was apparently actually concerned with his administration's responsiveness to public opinion to believe that he was doing what the people

wanted. The polls appeared to indicate that despite the contrary assertions of protestors, demonstrators, and rioters, public opinion did not really demand an end to the war. After all, until late in Johnson's term a majority of those polled did not disapprove of his policies.[14] In effect the polls permitted a public official with some actual desire to be responsive to public opinion, to more easily convince himself that he had been.

From Behavior to Attitude

Prior to the advent of polling, public opinion could often only be inferred from political behavior. Before the availability of voter survey data, for example, analysts typically sought to deduce electoral opinion from voting patterns, attributing candidates' electoral fortunes to whatever characteristics of the public mood could be derived from election returns. Often, population movements served as the bases for conclusions about public preferences. Even in recent years, the movement of white urbanites to the metropolitan fringe, dubbed "white flight," has been seen as a key indicator of white attitudes toward racial integration. Particularly, however, where the least articulate segments of the populace were concerned, governments often had little or no knowledge of the public mood until opinion manifested itself in some form of behavior. Generally, this meant violent or disruptive activity. In the modern era public opinion is synonymous with the polls. But, certainly through the 19th century, public opinion was usually equated with riots, strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts. Indeed, 19th century public sentiment could sometimes reveal itself

through the most curious forms of behavior. In London during the 1830s, for example, a favorite mechanism for the expression of popular opinion was the "illumination." In an "illumination" those espousing a particular point of view placed lanterns or candles in their windows. Often mobs went from house to house demanding that the occupants "illuminate." Householders who declined might have their windows smashed and dwelling sacked. On April 27, 1831, for example, a large mob formed to demand electoral reform. According to a contemporary account:

> . . . On that evening, the illumination was pretty general. . . . The mobs did a great deal of mischief. A numerous rabble proceeded along the Strand, destroying all windows that were not lighted. . . . In St. James' Square they broke the windows in the houses of the Bishop of London, the Marquis of Cleveland and Lord Grantham. The Bishop of Winchester and Mr. W.W. Wynn, seeing the mob approach, placed candles in their windows, which thus escaped. The mob then proceeded to St. James' street where they broke the windows of Crockford's, Jordan's, the Guards, and other Club houses. They next went to the Duke of Wellington's residence in Picadilly, and discharged a shower of stones which broke several windows. The Duke's servants fired out of the windows over their heads to frighten them, but without effect. The policemen then informed the mob that the corpse of the Duchess of Wellington was on the premises, which arrested further violence against Apsley House. . . .[15]

Obviously, this sort of behavior shed a good deal of light on the state of popular sentiment long before the development of survey research.

The advent of polling transformed public opinion from a behavioral to an attitudinal phenomenon. The polls elicit, organize, and publicize opinion without requiring any action on the part of the opinion

holder. Public presentation of an opinion via the polls by no means precludes its subsequent expression through behavior. Nevertheless, polling does permit any interested party an opportunity to assess the state of the public's mood without having to wait for some behavioral manifestation. From the perspective of political elites, the obvious virtue of the polls is that they enhance the possibility of recognizing and dealing with popular attitudes--even the attitudes of the most inarticulate segments of the populace--before they materialize in some unpleasant, disruptive, or threatening form of political action. In the democracies, of course, the most routine behavioral threat posed by public opinion is hostile action in the voting booth. Polling has certainly become one of the chief means employed by democratic political elites to attempt to anticipate and avert the electorate's displeasure. But, in both the democratic and dictatorial contexts, governments have also employed polling extensively to help forestall the possibility of popular disobedience and unrest.

In recent years, for example, many eastern European regimes have instituted survey programs. Polling has been used, in part, to forewarn the leadership of potential sources of popular disaffection, hostility, or anti-government activities. As Bodgan Osolnik observed, in eastern Europe opinion research provides, "a warning that some attitudes which political actors consider to be generally accepted . . . have not yet been adopted by public opinion." Such "misunderstandings" says Osolnik, "can be extremely harmful--and dangerous."[16] Polling allows the regime an opportunity to resolve these potential

"misunderstandings" before they pose a serious threat.

As early as the 1950s, to cite one concrete case, the Polish government obtained extensive survey data indicating that strong religious sentiment was widespread among the young. The regime became quite concerned with the implications of the continuing hold of "unorthodox ritualistic attitudes" on the generation that was expected to possess the strongest commitment to socialism. In response to its survey findings, the government embarked on a major program of antireligious and ideological indoctrination aimed at young people.[17] Over the past several years, the government of Poland has commissioned a number of studies of public opinion on political issues, designed to avert the sort of popular unrest that has frequently shaken the Polish state.[18] Obviously, however, recent events in Poland suggest that opinion polling is not precisely a guarantee of political stability.

The Polish government's response to surveys indicating potential trouble has been to seek to modify the attitudes deemed to be threatening. Attitude change campaigns, though, are not the only possible governmental responses to dissent in the authoritarian context. Gestapo chief, Heinrich Himmler, is reputed to have carefully studied polls of German attitudes toward the Nazi regime and its policies. Apparently, whenever he noted that some of those surveyed failed to respond with the appropriate opinions, Himmler demanded to know their names.[19]

In the United States, polling has typically been used as an adjunct to policy implementation. The execution of governmental programs

and initiatives is obviously facilitated to the extent that administrators are able to secure popular compliance. Polling can provide administrators with some idea of what citizens are and are not likely to tolerate and, thus, help them to avoid popular disobedience and resistance. As early as the 1930s, federal agencies began to poll extensively. For example, during the 30's the United States Department of Agriculture established a Division of Program Surveys to undertake studies of attitudes toward federal farm programs.[20] At the same time, extensive use was made of surveys by the Works Progress Administration, the Social Security Administration and the Public Health Service.[21] In recent years, polling of one sort or another has become a routine aspect of the process of policy implementation. In their well known study of policy implementation, for example, Pressman and Wildavsky note the matter-of-fact manner in which Floyd Hunter's Social Science Research and Development Corporation was awarded a $400,000 contract for an "economic power structure survey" as part of the Oakland redevelopment project. Project officials were not certain what role this survey was to play. Surveys had simply become an expected part of any major project.[22] Polling by United States governmental agencies is not confined to the domestic policy arena. Various units of the State Department and other foreign policy agencies have engaged in extensive polling abroad to assess the likely response of the citizens of other nations to American foreign policy initiatives aimed at them. For example, during the era of American involvement, both the Defense Department and the Agency for International Development

sponsored extensive polling in Vietnam to examine the effects of existing and proposed American programs.[23] Similarly, polling was conducted in Cuba and the Dominican Republic to assess likely popular reaction to contemplated American intervention.[24] A good deal of polling has also been sponsored in Europe by American governmental agencies concerned with European reactions to American propaganda appeals.[25] Of course, American administrative agencies are hardly the only ones to make use of opinion surveys. During the 1960s, for example, Soviet administrators began to employ polls of their programs' target populations to attempt to avoid a repetition of the sort of massive and costly popular resistance that hampered Soviet agricultural collectivization.[26]

Again, even the most extensive and skillful use of polling does not ensure that public opinion will only manifest itself attitudinally. Behavioral expressions of opinion is the form of protests, riots, strikes, and so on are common enough even in the era of survey research. The most accurate information about public attitudes is no guarantee that governments can or will act effectively to forestall their expression through some form of behavior. Yet, polling can offer governments a measure of knowledge about public opinion while it remains purely attitudinal in form. In an attitudinal form, opinion poses less of an immediate threat and remains amenable to modification or accommodation prior to the onset of trouble.

In some instances, of course, the knowledge of popular attitudes gleaned from the polls may convince those in power simply to bow to the popular will before it is too late. Such a response would certainly

be consistent with the hopes expressed by the advocates of polling. Yet, often enough, the effect of polling is to lessen the threat or pressure that public opinion is likely to impose on administrators and policy makers. By converting opinion from a behavioral to an attitudinal phenomenon, polling is, in effect, also transforming public opinion into a less immediately threatening and dangerous phenomenon. The polls can give a government a better opportunity to manipulate and modify public opinion and thus to avoid accommodation to citizen's preferences. One interesting recent example of this process is the activity of the 1965 American "Riot Commission." Charged with the task of preventing repetitions of the riots that rocked American cities during the 1960s, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders sponsored and reviewed a large number of surveys of black attitudes on a variety of political, social, and economic questions. These surveys allowed the Commission to identify a number of attitudes held by blacks that appeared to have contributed to their disruptive behavior. As a result of its surveys, the Commission was able to suggest several programs that might modify blacks' disagreeable attitudes and, thus, prevent further disorder. Significantly enough, the Riot Commission's report did not call for changes in the institutions and policies about which blacks had been violently expressing their views.[27] The effect of polling was, in essence, to help the government find a way to not accommodate the opinions blacks had expressed in the streets of America's urban ghettos.

From Group to Individual

Mass behavior was not the sole source of information about popular opinion prior to the advent of polling. Reports on the public's mood could usually also be obtained from the activists, leaders or notables of the nation's organized and communal groups. Public officials or others interested in the views of working people, for example, would typically consult trade union officers. Similarly, anyone concerned with the attitudes of, say, farmers would turn to the heads of farm organizations. Of course, interest group leaders, party leaders, and social notables seldom waited to be asked. These worthies would--and still do--voluntarily step forward to offer their impressions of membership opinion. Such impressions might not always have been fully accurate. But certainly group, party, and communal leaders often do have better opportunities to meet with and listen to their adherents than would be available to outsiders. Before the invention of polling these leaders quite probably possessed the most reliable data available on their followers' views. In the absence of contradictory evidence, at least, the claims of group, party, and communal leaders to have special knowledge of some portion of public opinion were strong enough to help give these individuals a good deal of influence in national affairs. In essence, public opinion was a valuable property belonging to partisan, interest, or communal groups and their heads.

The advent of polling transformed public opinion from a property of groups to an attribute of individuals. Opinion surveys can elicit

the views of individual citizens directly, allowing governments or other interested observers to bypass group leaders, social notables, party bosses or any other putative spokespersons for public opinion. The polls have never fully supplanted communal and interest group leaders as sources of information about popular attitudes. Yet, the polls do lessen the need for such intermediaries by permitting whatever agencies or organizations are interested in learning the public's views to establish their own links with opinion holders. At the same time, polling often has the effect of undermining the claims of group leaders and activists to speak for membership opinion. Frequently enough, the polls seem to uncover discrepancies between the claims of leaders or often self-appointed spokespersons on the one hand, and the opinions of the mass publics whose views these activists claim to reflect, on the other. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s opponents of the American anti-war movement often took heart from poll data apparently indicating that youthful anti-war protestors who claimed to speak for "young people" really did not. Some poll data, at least, suggested that on the average individuals under thirty years of age were even more "hawkish" than respondents over the age of fifty.[28]

This conversion of public opinion from a property of groups and their leaders to a more direct presentation of popular preferences has several consequences. On the one hand, the polls undoubtedly provide a somewhat more representative picture of the public's views than would usually be obtained from group leaders and notables. Leaders

and group spokesmen sometimes carlessly or deliberately misrepresent their adherents' opinions. Even with the best of intentions, the leaders of a group may be insufficiently sensitive to the inevitable disparity of viewpoints between activist and ordinary citizens, and simply assume that their followers' views are merely echoes of their own. Polling can be a useful antedote to inaccuracy as well as to mendacity.

At the same time, however, by undermining the capacity of groups, interests, parties, and the like to speak for public opinion, polling can also diminish the effectiveness of public opinion as a force in political affairs. In essence, polling intervenes between opinion and its organized or collective expression. Though they may sometimes distort member opinion, organized groups, interests and parties remain the most effective mechanisms through which opinion can be made to have an impact on government and politics. The polls' transformation of public opinion into an attribute of individuals increases the accuracy but very likely reduces the general efficacy with which mass opinion is publicly asserted.

One recent example of this phenomenon concerns the role of labor unions during the Nixon era. Many of the Nixon administration's policies, wage and price controls in particular, were strongly opposed by organized labor. Yet, the capacity of labor leaders to oppose the administration's program or to threaten electoral reprisals against legislators who supported it were constantly undercut by the polls. Poll data seemed generally to suggest that Nixon was personally popular

with union members, and that the majority of rank and filers had no strong views on the programs that particularly troubled the unions' leadership. As a result, the administration came to feel that it was reasonably safe to ignore the importunities of organized labor on a host of public issues.[29] By enhancing the visibility of the opinions of ordinary workers, the polls surely drew a more representative picture of working class opinion than had been offered by union officials. Yet the real cost of this more fully representative account of workers' views was, in a sense, a diminution of organized labor's influence over policy. A similar example, also drawn from American labor history, relates to the controversy over the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act. The capacity of organized labor to oppose this piece of legislation which it regarded as virulently anti-union, was constantly undermined by poll results. The polls seemed to indicate that labor union members were far less concerned than the unions' leaders with the Act's provisions. Moreover, union members did not appear to regard legislators' positions on Taft-Hartley as the major factors that should determine their choice at the polls. As a direct result of the poll data, a number of United States senators and representatives with large trade union constituencies were emboldened to vote for the Act and, subsequently, to vote to override Truman's veto. Apparently, Senator Taft, himself, only decided to stand for reelection after polls in Ohio indicated that union members--a key voting bloc in the state--did not oppose him despite his sponsorship of a piece of legislation that union leaders dubbed a "slave labor

act."[30]

It is not entirely a matter of coincidence that both these examples of the adverse effects of polling on the political influence of organized groups were drawn from the experience of the labor movement. Historically, the introduction of polling was, in fact, most damaging to the political fortunes of the social formations that represented the interests and aspirations of the working classes. Polling erodes one of the major competitive advantages that has traditionally been available to lower class groups and parties--a knowledge of mass public opinion superior to that of their middle and upper class opponents. The inability of bourgeois politicians to understand or sympathize with the needs of ordinary people is, of course, the point of one of the favorite morality tales of American political folklore, the misadventures of the "silk-stocking" candidate. And, indeed, office-seekers from Easy Street often find it difficult to communicate with voters on Cannery Row. To cite just one example, during the New York City mayoral race of 1894, the Committee of Seventy, a group that included the city's socially most prominent citizens, argued vehemently for improvements in the city's baths and lavatories, "to promote cleanliness and increased public comfort." The Committee's members seemed undisturbed by the fact that the city and nation in 1894 were in the grip of a severe economic downturn accompanied by unusually high unemployment and considerable distress and misery among the working classes. The Committee of Seventy did not receive the thanks of many working class New Yorkers for its firm stand on the lavatory issue.[31]

Simply as a matter of social proximity, working class parties or associations may have better access to mass opinion than is readily available to their rivals from the upper end of the social spectrum. As one Chicago precinct captain told Harold Gosnell during the 1930's,

> . . . you think you can come in here and help the poor. You can't even talk to them on their own level, because you're better, you're from the University. I never graduated from high school, and I'm one of them.[32]

Even more important than social proximity, however, is the matter of organization. In general, groups and parties which appeal mainly to working class constituencies rely more heavily than their middle and upper class rivals on organizational strength and coherence. Organization has typically been the strategy of groups that must cumulate the collective energies of large numbers of individuals to counter their opponents' superior material means or institutional standing. In the course of both American and European political history, for example, disciplined and coherent party organizations were generally developed first by groups representing the working classes. "Parties," Duverger noted, "are always more developed on the Left than on the Right because they are always more necessary on the Left than on the Right."[33]

What is important in the present context is that their relatively coherent and disciplined mass organizations gave parties of the "Left" a more accurate and extensive view of the public's mood than could normally be acquired by their less well organized opponents. In western Europe, the "branch" style of organization evolved by

working class parties in the 19th century gave them direct access to the views of a nation-wide sample of ordinary citizens. In the United States, the urban political machines that mobilized working class constituencies employed armies of precinct workers and canvassers. Among their other duties, these functionaries were responsible for learning the preferences, wants and needs of each and every voter living within an assigned precinct or election district. A Chicago machine precinct captain interviewed by Gosnell, for example, "thought that the main thing was to meet and talk to the voters on a man-to-man basis. . . It did not matter where the voters were met --in the ball park, on the rinks, at dances, or at the bar. The main thing was to meet them."[34] A thorough understanding of voters' concerns, of course, gave party officials a better sense of the types of candidates and appeals likely to win votes and build electoral loyalty. Through its extensive precinct organization, the urban machine developed a capacity to understand the moods, and thus to anticipate and influence the actions, of hundreds of thousands of voters.

The advent of polling eroded the advantage that social proximity and organization had given working class parties in the competition for mass electoral support. Of course, any sort of political group can use an opinion survey. Polls are especially suseful to carpetbaggers of all political stripes as means of scouting what may be new and foreign territory.[35]

But, historically, polling has been particularly valuable to

parties and candidates who lacked disciplined organizations and whose own social roots might not offer many clues to the desires of ordinary voters. Part of the historical significance of polling is that it represented a major element in the response of the Right to the Left's twin political advantages--greater organizational coherence and social consanguinuity with ordinary citizens. In the United States, systematic political polling was initiated during the second half of the 19th century. Most of the early polls were sponsored by newspapers and magazines affiliated with conservative causes and middle and upper class political factions. The conservative, Chicago Tribune, was a major promoter of the polls during this period. Prior to the critical election of 1896, the Tribune polled some 14,000 factory workers and purported to show that 80 percent favored McKinley over William Jennings Bryan.[36] Many of the newspapers and periodicals that made extensive use of political polling in the 19th century were linked with either the Mugwumps or the Prohibitionists--precisely the two political groupings whose members might be least expected to have much firsthand knowledge of the preferences of common folk. During the 1896 campaign the Mugwump, Chicago Record, spent more than $60,000 to mail postcard ballots to a random sample of one voter in eight in twelve midwestern states. 328,000 additional ballots went to all registered voters in Chicago. The Democrats feared that the Record poll was a Republican trick and urged their supporters not to participate.[37] Other prominent members of the Mugwump press that frequently sponsored polls before the turn of the century included the New York Herald, the

Columbus Dispatch, the Cincinnati Enquirer, the Springfield (Mass.) Republican and the Philadelphia Times.[38]

In the early years of the 20th century, many of the major polls were affiliated with groups on the political right. The Hearst newspapers, for example, polled extensively. Fortune magazine published widely-read polls. The Literary Digest which, of course, sponsored a famous presidential poll, was affiliated with the Prohibitionists.[39] The clientele of most of the major pre World War II pollsters, Gallup, Roper, and Robinson, for example, was heavily Republican, reflecting both the personal predilections of the pollsters and relative capacities of Democrats and Republicans of the period to understand public opinion without the aid of complex statistical analysis.[40] In recent years, the use of political polling has become virtually universal. Nevertheless, the polling efforts and uses of other forms of modern political technology by groups on the political right have been far more elaborate and extensive than those of other political factions.[41] Indeed, liberal Democrats are presently bemoaning the technological lead of their conservative Republican rivals.

Until the past several decades, polling was employed with much greater frequency in America than in Europe. It is worth noting, however, that probably the first extensive use of political polls in western Europe occurred after World War II under the aegis of several agencies of the United States government. These polls were designed, in large measure, to help centrist and right wing political forces against their socialist and communist foes.[42]

At the present time, in America and all the European democracies polling is used by parties and candidates of every political stripe. Opinion surveys are hardly a monopoly of the political Right. Yet, the fact remains that in the absence of polling, parties and groups representing the working classes would normally reap the political advantage of a superior knowledge of public opinion. Indeed, such groups traditionally depended heavily on their capacity to understand the mass public's mood as a counter to their opponents' generally superior material and institutional resources. The irony of polling is that the development of scientific means of measuring public opinion had its most negative effect upon precisely those groups whose political fortunes were historically most closely linked with mass public opinion.

From Assertion to Response

In the absence of polling, individuals typically choose for themselves the subjects of any public assertions they might care to make. Those persons or groups willing to expend the funds, effort, or time needed to acquire a public platform, normally also select the agenda or topics on which their views will be aired. The individual writing an angry letter to a newspaper or legislator generally singles out the object of his or her scorn. The organizers of a protest march typically define the aim of their own wrath. Presumably, 19th century mobs of "illuminators" determined of their own accord the matters on which the larger public would be enlightened.

The introduction of opinion surveys certainly did not foreclose individuals' opportunities to proffer opinions on topics of their own

choosing. Indeed, in the United States, a multitude of organizations, groups, and individuals are continually stepping forward to present the most extraordinary notions. Nevertheless, the polls elicit subjects' views on questions which have been selected by an external agency--the survey's sponsors--rather than by the respondents, themselves. Polling thus erodes individuals' control over the agenda of their own expressions of opinion. With the use of surveys' publicly expressed opinion becomes less clearly an assertion of individuals' own concerns and more nearly a response to the interests of others.

The most obvious problem stemming from this change is that polling can create a misleading picture of the agenda of public concerns. The matters which appear significant to the agencies sponsoring polls may be quite different from the concerns of the general public. Discrepancies between the polls' agenda and the general public's interests were especially acute during the political and social turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though, as we saw, polling was used by the government during this period to help curb disorder, the major commercial polls took little interest in the issues which aroused so much public concern. The year 1970, for example, was marked by racial strife and anti-war protest in the United States. At least 54 major anti-war protests and some 40 major instances of racial violence occurred that year.[43] Yet, the 1970 national Gallup Poll devoted only five percent of its questions to American policy in Vietnam and only two of 162 questions to domestic race relations.[44] Similarly, in 1971, despite the occurrence of some 35 major cases of racial unrest and 26 major episodes of student violence or protest,

the National Gallup Poll that year still devoted only two of its 194 questions to race relations and asked no questions at all about student protest. By contrast, Gallup in 1971 asked 42 political "horse race" questions, concerning citizens' candidate preferences and electoral expectations as well as 11 questions relating to presidential popularity.[45] An observer attempting to gauge the public's interests from poll data might have concluded that Americans cared only about election forecasts and official popularity, and were blithely unconcerned with the matters that were actually rending the social fabric during that era. In fact, the commercial polls' almost total disregard for questions pertaining to civil rights, race relations, and poverty before matters reached a violent flash point in the 1960s, sparked some controversy within the professional polling community. Former American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) President, W. Phillips Davison, called the polls' failure to anticipate the development of violent racial conflict, "a blot on the escutcheon of survey research."[46]

Especially, perhaps, given the commercial character of the polling industry, differences between the polls' concerns and those of the general public are probably inevitable. Questions are generally raised by the polls because they are of interest to clients and purchasers of poll data--newspapers, political candidates, governmental agencies, business corporations and so on. Questions of no immediate relevance to government, business, or politicians can have some difficulty finding their way into the surveys. This difficulty may be particularly

manifest in the case of issues such as the validity of the capitalist economic system or the legitimacy of governmental authority, issues which business and government usually prefer not to see raised at all, much less at their own expense. Because they seldom pose questions about the foundations of the existing order, while constantly asking respondents to choose from among the alternatives defined by that order--candidates and consumer products, for example--the polls may help to narrow the focus of public discussion and to reinforce the limits on what the public perceives to be realistic political and social possibilities.

But, whatever the particular changes polling may help to produce in the focus of public discourse, the broader problem is that polling fundamentally alters the character of the public agenda of opinion. So long as groups and individuals typically present their opinions on topics of their own choosing, the agenda of opinion is likely to consist of citizens' own needs, hopes, and aspirations. At least a large fraction of the opinion which is publicly expressed will involve demands and concerns that groups and individuals wish to bring to the attention of the government. Opinions elicited by the polls, on the other hand, mainly concern matters of interest to government, business or other poll sponsors. Typically, poll questions have as their ultimate purpose some form of exhortation. Businesses poll to help persuade customers to purchase their wares. Candidates poll as part of the process of convincing voters to support them. Governments poll as part of the process of inducing citizens to obey.

Sometimes several of these purposes are combined. In 1971, for example, the White House Domestic Council sponsored a poll dealing with a host of social issues designed both to assist the administration with policy planning and to boost the presidents' reelection efforts.[47]

In essence, rather than offer governments the opinions that citizens want them to learn, the polls tell governments--or other sponsors-- what they would like to learn about citizens' opinions. The end result is to change the public expression of opinion from an assertion of demand to a step in the process of persuasion.

Making Opinion Safer for Government

Taken together, the changes produced by polling transform public opinion from an unpredictable, extreme, and often dangerous force into a more docile expression of public sentiment. Opinion stated through the polls imposes less pressure and makes fewer demands upon government than would more spontaneous or natural assertions of popular sentiment. Though opinion may be expressed more democratically via the polls than through alternative means, polling can give public opinion a plebiscitary character--robbing opinion of precisely those features that might maximize its impact upon government and policy.

Many of those involved with survey research have long believed--or hoped--that the collection of accurate information about the public's wishes would enhance governmental responsiveness to popular opinion. No doubt, there are occasions when the polls help to increase the degree of correspondence between official policy and citizens' needs. But, obviously, accurate information is no guarantee of governmental responsiveness to popular desires. Indeed, reliable knowledge of public opinion can

permit governments to manage, manipulate, and use public sentiment more effectively. At the same time that some early students of survey research purported to see only the polls' implications for enhanced governmental sensitivity to opinion, others clearly recognized the value of polling as an instrument of governmental administration and policy implementation.

One academic spokesman for this later group was David Truman. While a young World War II naval officer attached to the Joint Production Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Truman published a paper with the telling title, "Public Opinion Research as a Tool of Public Administration."[48] Surveys, Truman indicated, can help administrators to identify and correct popular attitudes that might interfere with the successful operation of governmental programs. An example was the experience of, "one of the oldest and best managed federal conservation agencies."

> . . . Active operations had been started a short time before in several major conservation projects in the South. The methods employed were those which had been successfully used in the less sparsely populated sections of the West, where the population affected was comparatively close to national markets and nation-wide trends. Activation of the program in the southern area was accompanied by resistance, hostility, and, in a seriously large number of cases, acts of criminal destructiveness which threatened the entire project. The findings of the government opinion researchers who were asked to study the problem revealed that the agency had, while acting in a completely legal manner, ruptured the established habits of living in the communities and to some extent had even violated certain parts of what might be called the local code of public morality. Community standards thus condoned and even encouraged individual and group acts of vilence aimed at retaliation and at destroying the project.[49]

The agency's reaction to these findings was not to terminate the program that had provoked such violent popular opposition. Rather,

the poll data allowed administrators to develop more effective means of convincing the populace of the program's value. In due course, the project was able to proceed without further local resistance. Polling enhanced the agency's capacity to pinpoint and, ultimately, to modify the public attitudes that posed a threat to its objectives.

The role of polling in this case was to transmute public opinion into a form in which it could more easily be managed. Rather than promote governmental responsiveness to popular sentiment, the polls served to pacify or domesticate opinion, in effect, helping to make public opinion safer for government. In a sense, of course, the polls did contribute to the realization of a measure of consistency between public opinion and public policy. Polling helped administrators change public opinion to match existing policy.

Government: From Adversary to Manager of Opinion

Because it domesticates public opinion, polling has contributed to one of the 20th century's major political transformations--the shift from an adversary to a managerial relationship between government and popular opinion. Prior to the 20th century, governments mainly perceived mass opinion as a potentially dangerous adversary. As Davison observes, "rulers looked upon public opinion with something akin to terror." Eighteenth and 19th century political elites often would have only the vaguest understanding of popular attitudes before, "the government, the church hierarchy, and the aristocracy suddenly saw the roof blown off."[50] As a result of governments' fear of popular sentiment, before the 20th century the two basic

policies of most regimes toward public opinion were secrecy and censorship. Incumbent elites might occasionally attempt to sway popular feelings. But, on a routine basis, the central thrust of official action was to block access to information about governmental plans and operations and to seek, through secrecy, to inhibit the development of potentially hostile opinion on as many matters as possible.

In the United States, secrecy became part of the official policy of the executive branch as early as 1792 when President Washington sought to prevent a congressional inquiry into a military expedition conducted by General Arthur St. Clair. Later, citing the importance of secrecy, Washington declined to provide the House with information concerning a proposed treaty with Great Britain. Subsequent administrations also asserted the need for secrecy in the activities of the executive branch. Various congressional requests for information were refused by Jefferson, Monroe, Jackson, Tyler, Polk, Fillmore, Buchanan, Lincoln, Grant, Hayes, Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Coolidge, Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nixon. Attempts by private individuals to obtain information about governmental activities are often fruitless. Even the enactment of "freedom of information" legislation in recent years has by no means opened the process of government to full public scrutiny.[51]

All contemporary governments, of course, continue to employ some measure of censorship and secrecy to guard against real or imagined popular antagonism. But, during the 19th and 20th centuries, national

policies toward public opinion underwent a profound change as rulers began to discover the value of popular support. The unprecedented size, ardor, and military success of the citizen armies of post-revolutionary France provided what was perhaps the first concrete demonstration of the power that could be tapped by enlisting the active cooperation of a populace. But, the importance of popular cooperation became even more evident through the late 19th century as the scope and complexity of national governments increased. On a day to day basis, the 20th century state depends upon considerable support, cooperation, and sacrifice from its citizens in forms ranging from military service and large tax payments, through popular adherence to a multitude of rules and regulations. The scope and technical complexity of the modern state's activities, moreover, render governmental administration extremely sensitive to popular opposition. In the short term, opposition can often be forcibly quelled and a populace forcibly compelled to obey its rulers' edicts, pay taxes, and serve in the military. But, over long periods, even many of those governments commanding both the requisite armed might and appropriate lack of scruples have come to appreciate the wisdom of the Napoleonic dictum that one, "may do anything with a bayonet but sit on it." By cultivating favorable public opinion, present-day rulers hope to persuade their citizens to voluntarily obey, support and make whatever sacrifices are needed to further the state's goals.[52] In the 20th century, management of public opinion has become a routine public function in the democracies as well as in the dictator-

ships. Typically, the censor has been supplanted--or at least joined --by the public relations officer as the governmental functionary most responsible for dealing with public opinion.

In the United States, of course, efforts have been made by every administration since the nation's founding to influence public sentiment. But, the management of opinion did not become a routine and formal official function until World War I. In some respects, the first world war is the point of transition from government-as-adversary to government-as-manager of popular opinion in the United States. On the one hand, the Wilson administration created a censorship board, enacted sedition and espionage legislation and attempted to suppress groups like the International Workers of the World (IWW) and the Socialist party that opposed the war. Eugene Debs, it might be recalled, was arrested and convicted of having violated the Espionage Law, and sentenced to ten years in prison, for delivering a speech which defended the IWW.[53]

At the same time, however, World War I was the first modern industrial war requiring a total mobilization of popular effort on the homefront for military production. The war effort required the government to convince the civilian population to bear the costs and make the sacrifices needed to achieve industrial and agricultural, as well as battlefield success. The chief mechanism for eliciting the support of public opinion was the Committee on Public Information (CPI), chaired by journalist and publicist George Creel. The CPI organized a massive public relations and news management program

aimed at promoting popular enthusiasm for the war effort. This program included the dissemination of favorable news, the publication of patriotic pamphlets, films, photos, cartoons, bulletins, and periodicals, and the organization of "war expositions" and speakers' tours. Special labor programs were aimed at maintaining the loyalty and productivity of the work force. Much of the CPI's staff was drawn from the major advertising agencies. According to Creel, the work of the Committee "was distinctly in the nature of an advertising campaign . . . our object was to sell the war."[54]

The CPI's program was a temporary wartime effort. Within several months of the armistice, much of the government's opinion management apparatus was disbanded. The work of the CPI, however, was a harbinger of the permanent expansion of governmental opinion management that began with the New Deal and has persisted to the present. The enlargement of the scope of governmental activity that began during the Roosevelt administration, was accompanied by an explosion of official public relations efforts. Each new department, agency, bureau, office or committee quickly established a public relations arm to persuade the citizenry to cooperate with its programs and support its objectives. The link between the expansion of governmental activity and the increased role of opinion management during the New Deal was put into very clear focus by Chester Bowles. Early in his long career of public service, Bowles served as Director of the Office of Price Administration (OPA). Under Bowles' leadership, the OPA developed an extensive public information program whose large

budget eventually drew congressional criticism. Bowles' defense of the program is recalled in his memoirs.

> At one point Congress threatened to cut our information budget. I testified that if they deprived us of the means of explaining our program to the people, our requirements for investigators and inspectors to enforce our regulations would be greatly increased. With a $5 million annual budget for information, I said I could keep the American people reasonably informed about our regulations and their own obligations and rights as citizens. But if Congress cut this $5 million, I would have no alternative but to make a public request for $15 million to hire law enforcement inspectors to prosecute the many people who, often through their own ignorance and lack of information, had acted illegally. If Congress preferred this, it was their prerogative. I myself preferred persuasion to police-state tactics.[55]

The government's interest in "explaining programs to the people" has, of course, increased substantially since the New Deal. Many departments and agencies engage in opinion management efforts that dwarf the OPA's 5 million dollar program. One recent estimate suggests that the annual salaries of federal public information and public relations personnel totalled almost $100 million dollars. In 1976, the federal government spent over $30 million on television and motion picture products. In 1975, federal agencies paid almost $150 million to private agencies for advertising campaigns. In recent years, the Defense Department's Defense Information School has graduated more than 2000 "public information specialists" each year. Every American citizen is routinely exposed to some aspect of the federal government's information program--the news releases, films, public service spots, travelling exhibits, tours, open houses,

commercial television programs and motion pictures produced with the cooperation of a federal agency, or one of the many other public relations efforts that have become such a routine part of the process of government in the 20th century.[56]

Polling is the spearhead of this vast opinion management apparatus. Opinion surveys provide governments with more or less reliable information about current popular sentiment, offer a guide to the character of the public relations efforts that might usefully be made, and serve as means of measuring the effect of "information programs" upon a target population. In essence, polling allows governments a better opportunity to anticipate, regulate, and manipulate popular attitudes. Ironically, some of its early students believed that polling would open the way for "government by opinion."[57] Instead, polling has mainly helped to promote the governance of opinion.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Robert Nisbett, "Public Opinion versus Popular Opinion," The Public Interest (Fall, 1975), pp. 166-192.

[2]See Walter C. Langer, The Mind of Adolph Hitler (New York: Basic Books, 1972). Also Ivone Kirkpatrick, Mussolini, A Study in Power (New York: Hawthorn, 1964).

[3]For example, Harwood Childs, one of the most prominent of the early academic analysts of public opinion, argued that, "[the polls] bring public opinion into the open and thereby make governmental bodies more responsive to that opinion." Harwood Childs, Public Opinion (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1965), p. 84. Similarly, George Gallup once averred that the quality of representative government could be substantially improved if representatives had, "an accurate measure of the wishes, aspirations and needs of different groups within the general public." George Gallup, The Pulse of Democracy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1940), p. 266.

[4]Measurement of human attitudes and behavior can often be "intrusive," changing rather than simply recording the phenomena in question. The standard discussion of the problem is Eugene Webb, et al., Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966). Though the problem of intrusive measurement may be most acute in the social sciences, it is hardly unknown in the biological and physical sciences. The problem of "uncertainty" in the field of quantum mechanics, to take an obvious example, derives from the fact that measurement of an electron motion affects the path the electron will take. The observed motion of an electron is actually, as Lev Landau puts it, "a product of its

interaction," with a measuring instrument. L.D. Landau and E.M. Lifshitz, Quantum Mechanics, translated from the Russian by J.B Sykes and J.S. Bell (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley, 1958), p. 3.

[5]Chester F. Barnard, "Public Opinion in a Democracy," (Princeton University, Herbert L. Baker Foundation, 1939), p. 13.

[6]No doubt, federal regulatory legislation like the "truth in polling" bill recently proposed to the U.S. House of Representatives as a means of curbing polling fraud and bias would, if enacted, function as a federal endorsement or guarantee of polling accuracy and, thus, further strengthen the polls' dominance over other sources of information about public opinion. For a discussion of truth in polling legislation see Michael Wheeler, Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics (New York: Liveright, 1976), ch. 12.

[7]Robert Weissberg, Public Opinion and Popular Government (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 12-16.

[8]Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, Public Opinion (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 105. See also Hadley Cantril, "The Intensity of an Attitude," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 41 (1946), pp. 129-135.

[9]Aage R. Clausen, Philip E. Converse and Warren E. Miller, "Electoral Myth and Reality: The 1964 Election," American Political Science Review, 59 (June, 1965), pp. 321-332.

[10]For example, at the height of the Viet Nam War in 1972, despite the fact that public attitudes on American involvement were quite polarized, over 11% of those whose opinions were expressed only

through the polls still indicated that they "didn't know" whether the U.S. had been right to become involved in Viet Nam. Among individuals who engaged in some form of political activity during that period, by contrast, only 5% remained undecided about the question of American involvement. During the same year, one in which the U.S. was beset by a number of serious crises, only 60% of those individuals whose opinions were only expressed through the polls could identify two or more national problems. Seven per cent of these individuals could name none. Among those, one the other hand, who reported engaging in some form of political activity, almost 90% could name two or more national problems and only 2% were unable to name any. Source of data: Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1972. Data were made available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research.

[11]Walter Wilcox, "The Congressional Poll and Non-Poll," in Edward C. Dreyer and Walter A. Rosenbaum (eds.), Political Opinion and Electoral Behavior (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1966), p. 394.

[12]Wheeler, Ch. 8.

[13]Ibid., Ch. 7. See also Louis Harris, The Anguish of Change (New York: Norton, 1973), Ch. 3.

[14]The percentage of Americans who believed that entry into the Viet Nam War had been a mistake did not surpass the proportion who did not regret America's involvement until late in 1967. See John E. Meuller, "Trends in Popular Support for the Wars in Korea and Viet Nam," American Political Science Review, 65 (1971), pp. 363-364.

[15]Alan Silver, "The Demand for Order in Civil Society," in David Bordua (ed.), The Police (New York: Wiley, 1967), pp. 17-18.

[16]Bogdan Osolnik, "Socialist Public Opinion," Socialist Thought and Practice, 20 (October, 1955), p. 120.

[17]Walter D. Conner and Zvi Y. Gitelman, Public Opinion in European Socialist Systems (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 77.

[18]Geoffrey Smith, "Can Marxism Stand Prosperity?" Forbes (July 1, 1977), pp. 41-46.

[19]Arthur L. Smith, Jr., "Life in Wartime Germany: Colonel Ohlendorff's Opinion Service," Public Opinion Quarterly, 36 (Spring, 1972), pp. 1-7.

[20]Bernard C. Hennessey, Public Opinion (North Scituate, Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1975), p. 60.

[21]James L. McCamy, Government Publicity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), Ch. 5. See also, Henry A. Wallace and James L. McCamy, "Straw Polls and Public Administration," Public Opinion Quarterly, 4 (June, 1940), pp. 221-223.

[22]Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, Implementation (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979), Second Edition, p. 31.

[23]Wheeler, p. 133. Also Herbert I. Schiller, The Mind Managers (Boston: Beacon, 1973), pp. 108-110.

[24]Hadley Cantril, The Human Dimension (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967), Ch. I.

[25]Ibid., Chs. 15 through 18.

[26]Conner and Gitelman, Ch. 4.

[27]Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam, 1968), esp. Ch. 17. For an analysis, see Robert

M. Fogelson, Violence as Protest (New York: Doubleday, 1971), esp., Ch. 7.

[28] Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg, The Real Majority (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970), p. 49. The polls might also point to discrepancies between the views of those claiming to speak for "old people" and their constituents. Recently, for example, Representative Claude Pepper of Florida, the Democratic Chair of the House Select Committee on Aging accused the Republican National Committee of attempting to "pervert and prostitute" a forthcoming White House Conference on Aging by conducting a poll of the political views of approximately 900 of the delegates. Representative Pepper who, of course, frequently claims to speak for the views and interests of older Americans, had planned to use the occasion of the conference to attack the Reagan administration's possible plans for cutbacks in the social security program. Presumably Pepper feared that the Republican poll might be designed to suggest that he did not fully reflect the views of those for whom he claimed to speak. See Warren Weaver, Jr., "G.O.P. Draws Fire for Polling Delegates to Forum on Aging," New York Times, October 23, 1981.

[29] Harris, Ch. 9.

[30] Charles W. Roll, Jr. and Albert H. Cantril, Polls (New York: Basic Books, 1972), p. 153.

[31] Gerald W. McFarland, Mugwumps, Morals and Politics 1884-1920, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), p. 92.

[32] Harold Gosnell, Machine Politics: Chicago Model (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968 Rev. Ed.), p. 70.

[33] Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (New York: Wiley, 1954), p. 426.

[34] Gosnell, p. 82.

[35] See J.K. Javits, "How I Used a Poll in Campaigning for Congress," Public Opinion Quarterly, 11 (Summer, 1947), pp. 220-226.

[36] Richard Jensen, "American Election Analysis," in Seymour Martin Lipset (ed.), Politics and the Social Sciences (New York: Oxford, 1969), p. 229.

[37] Ibid., pp. 229-230.

[38] For a discussion of newspaper polls see Claude Robinson, Straw Votes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), Ch. 4.

[39] Jensen, p. 238.

[40] See Wheeler, esp. Ch. 3.

[41] For example, see Rich Jaroslovsky, "New-Right Cashier," Wall Street Journal (October 6, 1978), p. 1. Appropriately enough, according to a recent New York Times report, President Reagan and his advisors have relied more steadily and extensively on polling for their political information than any previous national administration. B. Drummond Ayres, Jr., "G.O.P. Keeps Tabs on Nation's Mood," New York Times, November 16, 1981.

[42] See Schiller, pp. 108-110. Also Cantril, Chs. 14-19.

[43] Calculated from Dorothy Kattleman (ed.), Facts on File Five-Year Index, 1966-1970 (New York: Facts on File, 1971).

[44] Calculated from George H. Gallup, The Gallup Poll, Public Opinion 1935-1971 (New York: Random House, 1972), Vol. III.

[45] Calculated from Facts on File and the Gallup Poll.

[46] W. Phillips Davison, "Public Opinion Research as Communication," Public Opinion Quarterly, 36 (Fall, 1972), p. 314.

[47] Wheeler, p. 4.

[48]David Truman, "Public Opinion Research as a Tool of Public Administration," Public Administration Review, 5 (Winter, 1945), pp. 62-72.

[49]Ibid., p. 66.

[50]Davison, p. 313.

[51]Adam C. Breckenridge, The Executive Privilege (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974), Ch. 3.

[52]See Benjamin Ginsberg, The Consequences of Consent (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley, 1982), esp. Chs. 1 and 3.

[53]Marc Karson, American Labor Unions and Politics (Boston: Beacon, 1965), Ch. 9.

[54]George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York: Harper, 1920). Quoted in Frederick Irion, Public Opinion and Propaganda (New York: Crowell, 1952), p. 414.

[55]Chester Bowles, Promises to Keep (New York: Harper, 1971), p. 93.

[56]See Charles Steinberg, The Information Establishment (New York: Hastings House, 1980). Also, Weissberg, Ch. 10, and J. William Fullbright, The Pentagon Propaganda Machine (New York: Vintage, 1971). See also David Wise, The Politics of Lying (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[57]George Gallup was among the most prominent of those who believed that polling would eventually lead to, "government by opinion" -- a state of affairs that James Bryce had once forseen as the final evolutionary stage of American democracy. Gallup,

The Pulse of Democracy, Ch. 9. See also, James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (London: Macmillan, 1888), Vol. II, p. 220.